



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT TO HOLD BROADBAND WORKSHOPS

ST. LOUIS, MO., October 4, 2004 -- USDA Rural Development announces two regional rural broadband workshops for assisting potential broadband loan applicants with information and technical assistance on how to apply for broadband infrastructure funding. As part of President Bush's goal to expand high-speed Internet access to every household by the year 2007, USDA Rural Development is aggressively working to provide qualified borrowers with investment funding needed to expand such infrastructure. These workshops are a continuation of the outreach program that included five regional workshops during the past summer.

The workshops will be detailed, "hands-on" instruction on developing an application for USDA Rural Development's broadband loan and loan guarantee programs. The first workshop will be held October 19, 2004 in Nashua, New Hampshire at the Crowne Plaza Nashua. The second workshop will be held October 21, 2004 in St. Louis, Missouri at the Marriott West.

The workshops will be at no cost to the participants, but since space is limited, registration prior to the conferences will be required. The workshops are targeted toward assisting those who are prepared and have the capacity to provide broadband access to rural parts of the United States. Discussions will include: What is required in a market survey; a business plan; how to satisfy credit support requirements and how to develop financial forecasts and other financial information. Eligibility will be discussed in terms of broadband services, communities, technologies, and who qualifies as a borrower.

USDA Rural Development has nearly \$1.4 billion available for loans and loan guarantees. Details on the specific workshops are listed below.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development and critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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Locations and Dates:

The Workshop will begin at 9:00 a.m. in Nashua, NH and at 8:30 a.m. in St. Louis and continue until approximately 3:00 p.m. The Rural Development broadband staff will be available at the same location after the workshop and from 8:30 a.m. till 12 noon the next day for individual guidance by prior appointment.

Nashua, New Hampshire: October 19, 2004, at Crowne Plaza Nashua, Ballroom, 2 Somerset Parkway, NH; Phone 603-886-1200; www.crowneplazanashua.com . To register, please contact Karen Demers, karen.demers@nh.usda.gov .

St. Louis, Missouri: October 21, 2004, at the St. Louis Marriott West, Salon C. 660 Maryville Center Dr., St. Louis, MO; 314-878-2747; www.marriottstlouiswest.com . To register, please contact Raymond Homer, USDA Rural Development, raymond.homer@mo.usda.gov .

National office contact for workshop information: Mary Campanola, Workshop Coordinator, mary.campanola@usda.gov.

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